

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventor : Yoichiro Igarashi, et al.
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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

S I R:

In order to comply with discretionary regulations 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, attached hereto is a copy of Form PTO-1449 and copies of the non-US documents (if any) listed thereon. These documents contain information which the Examiner may consider to be important in deciding whether to issue a patent in the instant application.

For documents written in a language other than English, English language abstracts and/or explanations are annexed thereto explaining relevancy in accordance with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3).

Also attached is a Notification of Reason(s) for Refusal with translation dated March 18, 2008, for corresponding Japanese Patent Application JP 2000-032372. All of the documents listed in Form PTO-1449 appear in the Notification of Reason(s) for Refusal.

The present Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted in compliance with 37 CFR 1.56 as an Examiner might consider any cited document important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent, but the citation of each document is not to be construed as an admission that such document is necessarily relevant or prior art. No representation is intended that the cited documents represent the results of a complete search, and it is anticipated that the Examiner in the normal course of examination, will make an independent search and will determine the best prior art consistent with 37 CFR 1.104 (a), and in the course of such search will review for relevance every document cited on the attached form even if not initialed.

Each item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement, and therefore applicant respectfully submit that no fee is due. However any fee determined to be due with this paper may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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